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OF

VERSE



BY

RALPH S. WOODWORTH

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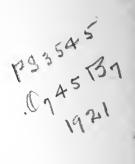
VERSE



BY

RALPH S. WOODWORTH

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PRELUDE

If a perusal of these poems serve to entertain, to inspire, to uplift or to beguile you for a time from the cares of a busy life, the author will be content.

R. S. W.



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Elkhart, Indiana

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GOD'S BENEDICTION HOUR

Blest twilight time, dear evening hour, When all the earth is hushed to rest, When wearied child and drooping flower Ailke recline on parent breast. Blest eventide, 'tis then we know That Christ is near to lift us higher, And make our souls to feel the glow Of true religions holy fire.

The morning sun is pure and bright With scented air from sun-kissed hill. The noontide bursts with dazzling light O'er wooded slope and rippling rill; But when the evening shadows fall, We feel God's presence everywhere, 'Tis then we hear the Savior's call, 'Tis then we bow in earnest prayer.

Majestic hour of all the day,
When nature's voices whisper low,
When angels sing and mortals pray
To Him who all our grief doth known.
Then may we lift our hearts to Thee,
Then may we feel Thy wondrous power,
Then may we all from sin be free,
At this, Thy benediction hour.

CONTENT

We may travel o'er mountain and meadow, We may journey through valley and dell, We may ride on the waves of the ocean, And hear the sweet story they tell. But unless we bear burdens for others And lift up the heads that are bent, We never can hope to discover The greatest of treasure, content.

We way dwell in a palace of splendor,
We may juggle with nuggets of gold,
But unless we are loving and tender
Our hearts will be heavy and cold.
Help others, the way will grow brighter,
The way that the Nazarene went
And, lo! our own loads will be lighter
And we'll find that great treasure, content.



CAN ANY ONE DOUBT OUR GOD?

Can any one look at the morning sun
As it lightens the purpling east,
With its majesty surpassing far
Any monarch arrayed for a feast,
Or watching at night as it sinks to rest
In the beauttiful western sky,
Have a doubt that God in His power and might
Is reigning supremely on high?

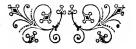
Can any one look at a pansy or rose,
Or the tint of a butterfly's wing,
And think that aught but a power divine,
Could form such an exquisite thing?
Can any one look on this glorious world,
Or the azure sky above,
And doubt the Creator of heaven and earth
And His infinite wealth of love?



AN OUTDOOR DREAM

Just a little cottage with the roses climbing 'round And the morning glories hanging from the eaves, Daises and the clover blossoms springing from the ground Midst the music of the rustling lilac leaves; The rippling of a brooklet flowing noisily along Close bordering a tiny garden spot, With every breath a ablessing and life and endless song And trouble, care and worry all forgot.

With mild-eyed cattle grazing in the meadow near at hand. And the quail a calling "Bob-White" t oher mate, With Dick, my faithful pointer, to come at my command And chanticleer perched on the garden gate, The blue smoke slowly curling from my pipe of peace serene, Its fragrance filtering through the falling dew, But one thing more is needful to complete the happy scene And that, you've surely guessed, sweetheart, is you.



WHEN BILLY AND I GO FISHING

The blackird calls from the willow tree, The bees are a humming drowsily, And Bill squints his eye as he says to me, "Let's you and I go fishing."

Then I look up at the blue in the sky And think of the meadows green near by And say as I glance with anxious eye, "All right, we'll go a-fishing."

And Bill, he acts like a circus clown As we turn our backs on the busy town And size up the beauty of nature's gown On our way to the lake a-fishing.

But as like as not the fish won't lite And Bill will say that "the wind ain't right," But that won't lessen his appetite When Billy and I go fishing.

Ah! a day like this has a value rare And I can't learn a lesson anywhere That to my mind will quite compare With a trip to the lake a-fishing.

And whether its August or gentle June The shadows of night come all too soon, But nature has put us back in tune For Billy and I've been fishing.



LINES ON LINCOLN

Steadfast, serene, alone he stood In time of greatest strees. The while his heart poured forth a flood Of love and tenderness.

No wonder 'tis, nor mystery That martyred he should be, No character in history So like the Christ as he.



WASHINGTON

Patient and loyal, true and kind,
With tenderness and strenth combined,
A noble man of master mind
Was Washington.

His henored name will ever be
The dearest word in history;
And all revere the memory
Of Washington.

And so today we celebrate

The birth of one both good and great,

Whose courage changed a nation's fate,

George Washington.



A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Thou God above, in realms above, In whom we live and breathe and move, Accept our humble thanks, we pray, On this our Savior's natal day. For peace and plenty, health and cheer, And all the blessings of the year.

And as we celebrate the birth
Of Thy dear Son, who blessed the earth
With love and gladness long ago,
So may we live and learn and know
The greatest lesson in life's school,
As taught by Him, the golden rule.



A CHRISTMAS SONG

In the midst of this season of gladness
When the bells ring a musical chime,
There are those bearing burdens of sadness
Whose lips are lilting a rhyme.
Some mother is heartsick and lonely,
Some father is silent and sad,
Some drink of the bitter cup only,
Not all can be cheery and glad.

But whether in pain or in pleasure,
We honor the birth of our Lord,
We all may receive a full measure
Of help and of strength from His word.
And lifting alike our petitions
To Him who can still the rough sea,
Serenely we'll meet life's conditions
As Christ did on blue Galilee.



EASTER SONG

All hail! al lhail!! to the risen King,
To the man of Galilee.

Let the praise of every nation ring
Triumphant o'er land and sea,
For the power of Christ is the same today
As it was when the stone was rolled away.

Let us not forget, in this world of stress,
To follow our King's command,
"Every knee shall bow and each tongue confes.
It is easy to understand.
For the gospel of Christ is the same today
As it was when the stone was rolled away.

Then down the ages and through the gloom Of darkness that sin has made, The same sweet voice from the Savior's tomb Says, "'Tis I, be not afraid," For the love of Christ is the same today As it was when the stone was rolled away.

AN EASTER ODE

Easter time comes to remind us Christ is our risen King. Joyous today may He find us Ready His praise to sing. Banish all sorrow and sadness, Bare is the riven tomb, Nothing but glory and gladness, Never a thought of gloom.

Lovingly He watches o'er us, We are His children all. Bright is the pathway before us We shall not faint or fall. He is our Savior forever, Soon shall we see His face. We shall abide with Him ever, Saved by His wondrous grace.



A PRAYER

When'er my heart is bowed with grief, When'er the world seems dark and drear, When'er oppressed by unbelief, Come Thou, O Christ, and linger near.

Let me but hear Thy voice divine. Let me but know that Thou are near, Let me but feel Thy hand in mine, 'Twill drive away all doubt and fear.

In clouds and sunshine be my guide,
In joy and sadness be my friend;
Walk all through life close by my side,
Be mine, dear Lord, unto the end.



BE KIND

Just to be always kind, my friend, Is such an easy thing to do, But when the day is at an end And with its duties we are through, Our souls are chastened and refined If we have been sincerely kind.

For kindness is the child of love, And where love has a dwelling place, The light that shineth from above Illuminates both soul and face, And sweet contentment we shall find If we will be sincerely kind.



A MEMORY

So near, so near, He seemed to be That sweetest peace came unto me.

My listening ear

Could almost hear Him saying, child there's naught to fear, And there was not, with Christ so near.

So near, so near, He seemed to be. That His dear self my soul could see.

His radiant face
Made that drear place
As bright as heavenly places be;
Gloom changed to glory there for me.

So near, so near, He seemed to be. That I was lost in ecstasy.

I longed to go
And told Him so
But hearkened when He whispered, No,
Your work's unfinished here below.

And so I asked for strength and grace, For every time and every place,

To do my best;

And leave the rest With Him, and may I never stray From my dear Savior's side away.

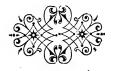
LET ME IN THY PRESENCE BE

Savior when this life is o'er, When my soul from earth is free, When I reach the heavenly shore, Let me in Thy presence be.

When I cross death's narrow stream Let me not lose sight of Thee, Gently, kindly, on me beam, Let me in Thy presence be.

In Thy glorious courts above I will learn Thy praise to tell, In the radiance of Thy love, With the blest forever dwell.

Hear me, Lord, as I shall pray Softly now on bended knee, In that grand eteranl day Let me in Thy presence be.





LINCOLN

When Lincoln spoke
The nation held a listening ear,
Proud freedom woke
And cruel slavery quaked with fear.

When Lincoln died
The stricken nation wept and grieved
'Till freedom cried,
He waits above; his task achieved.



LIFE

O, Life is a joyous thing And we toss our hand at fate, For life is to laugh and sing When the heart has found its mate.

The days like a dream drift by, And pleaasant the way and straight And cloudless and bright our sky When the heart hath found its mate.

But life is a dreary thing, And weeping we watch and wait For the peace that death shall bring, When the heart hath lost its mate.



A FANCY

My love is a fairy, as light and as airy,
As ever the down on a thistle could be,
Some day I will marry this beautiful fairy
And take her away o'er the fathomless sea.
We'll dwell in the heather, be happy together,
And nothing will trouble us all the day long.
We'll gather sweet flowers until the night hours
Then be lulled to sleep by the nightingale's song.

No evil shall harm us and naught can alarm us,
For we'll be as pure as the dewdrops at dawn.
The birds will all love us, the bright stars above us
Will watch o'er our sleep till night's curtains are drawn.
When life's hours are ending, the angels descending,
Will bear us away to our home in the sky,
Where nothing will ever occur to discover
The love of my beautiful fairy and I.



A SUPPLICATION

Search me Lord and know my heart, Try me all my thoughts to know, When from right I would depart, Lead as Thous wouldst have me go.

Thou has laid Thine hand on me Compassing my path about, Whither. Master, shall I flee That Thou canst not find me out.

Yea, the darkness hideth not From Thine eye, and like the day Shines the night around the spot Where, in shame, I turn away.

If I take the morning's wings O'er the boundless sea to dwell, Lo, Thy hand in mercy clings, Thou shalt guide me there as well.

When in secret I was made All imperfect, Thou didst see, Let me then be not afraid, Draw me nearer, Lord, to Thee.

Search me, Lord, and know my hear? Try me all my thoughts to know, When from right I would depart; Lead as Thous wouldst have me go.

ARE WE DOING THE BEST WE CAN?

Are we doing the best we can today,
The best we know how to do?
It's one thing you know to preach and pray
And another to carry it through.
And I wonder if we can truly say
We are doing the best we can today.

Are we doing the best we can today, The very best we can do? The time is short that we have to stay, And it's best to be brave and true, And a glorious thing indeed to say We are doing the best we can today.

Are we doing the best we can today Regardless of lodge or creed? Are we always able to keep away From graft and grab and greed? Oh! happy the man who can always say, I am doing the best I can today.

Are we doing the best we can today, Or do we quibble and twist For the coin, in every possible way To hold in our puny fist? Oh! let's turn about and be able to say We are doing the best we can today.

WHEN CONSISTENCY PREVAILS.

I wonder when the time will ever be When Capital and Labor can agree; When the men whom we elect Will continue to respect The pledges that they made so earnestly.

I wonder when the time will ever be When the Preachers can forget their salary For just a little while, And emulate the style Of Him they represent so fervently.

I wonder when the time will ever be
When all of us our duty plainly see
To weed our hearts of greed
And help the ones in need.
God speed the time when all these things shall be.



THE GUIDING STAR.

When Christ was born That gladsome morn Two thousand years ago,

A star of love Shone from above His resting place to show.

And wise men came With hearts aflame To worship and adore.

And shepherds meek Their Lord did seek And spread the tidings o'er.

O' Eastern Star
In skies afar
Shine ever clear and bright,
Shine now as then
When other men
Were guided by thy light.

Lead us each day
From sin away
We fix our hearts on thee
O! Lead us straight
Through heaven's gate
To dwell eternally.



A CHRISTMAS PRAYER.

Teach us, O Christ to understand How we should worship Thee today. For blessings from Thy bounteous hand May we be grateful, Lord we pray. But most of all, for Thy redeeming power May we be thankful every day and hour.

To earthly friends we freely give
The gifts that they most dearly prize.
Help us, O Christ, for Thee to live
And make some daily sacrifice.
For when life's little race so swiftly run
Is o'er, Eternity is just begun.



EASTER THOUGHTS.

- What does Easter time mean to me, and what does it mean to you?
- Does it mean a display of grand array without an emotion true?
- Or do we behold in the sunset's gold, the touch of the Master's hand?
- Does the blue above but reflect His love over the sun-kissed land?
- Do the echoing voices of long ago repeat the sweet story old
- Of a risen Christ and an empty tomb from which the stone was rolled?
- Do we list to the Christ as He speaks today, or do we pass Him by
- And hasten along with the careless throng? How is it with you and I?
- Oh! our hearts should thrill at each song bird's trill, and the music of stream and wood
- Should vibrate fine with the voice divine and the world seem wondrous good;
- For we are His children and He our King and tenderly from above
- He reaches a merciful hand to us—for God, our God, is love.

AN EASTER HYMN.

We may not see His pierced hands Nor look into His face, But we can feel His cleansing power And know His saving grace.

We may not see the empty tomb From which the stone was rolled, But we can claim His Promises, The sweetest ever told.

And though temptations come to us, And though at times we fall We find, if we are penitent Forgiveness for all.

Then let us not forget to love, To honor and obey The Christ who died and rose again On that triumphant day.



THE STREET FIDDLER.

He leaned half wearily against the post
That stood like sentinel at corner of the street;
His sightless eyes saw not the passing host,
His ears were heedless of the rushing feet.
But Oh! the music he could bring
From out each silent slumbering string.

His violin caressingly, he held
Beneath his chin, against the sunken breast,
And fast or slow the magic bow propelled
By slender fingers moving swift and deft,
And melody seductive, sweet,
Poured out upon the busy street.

His sallow face pathetically upturned Betrayed the sadness of his lonely heart; The fire of genius that so brightly burned, Seemed phantom-like, and from himself apart, Yet, Oh! the sweetness he could bring From out each trembling tuneful string.



WHEN SORROW MAKES US KIN.

There's a fact that's worth observing along life's rugged way,

It gives us faith and courage and helps us every day; It's the love that's lying latent, the spark divine within, And we reach a common level when sorrow makes us kin.

When multitudes are stricken with famine, flood or fire, The world responds as quickly as the word comes off the wire,

And when accident or sickness lays any of us low, The burden of't is lightened by affection's tender glow.

For sorrow draws us nearer upto God as well as man, It's visitation teaches us to live the best we can; And sordid self is lifted and we feel the God within, And equality is recognized when sorrow makes us kin.



IT MAY BE.

It may be when the mists shall clear So that our vision sweeps the skies, That every lingering doubt and fear Will melt away before our eyes, And that His spirit like a dove Will wing its way to our retreat, And lead us by the cord of love In safety to our Master's feet.

It may be in that blissful day
When we our Savior's face behold,
When earthly cares have passed away
And life's short story has been told,
That He will take us by the hand
And, basking in that smile benign,
We'll somehow learn and understand
The boundless depths of love divine.



THE GOLDEN AGE THAT IS TO BE.

O- Golden Age that is to be, When naught but good we all shall see. When greed and vice shall pass away And love and justice rule the day, When all the world from sin is free In that glad time that is to be.

When with each day's descending sun, We count some righteous victory won, And when each dawn that glints the sky, Shines His approval from on high. When peace joins hands with purity, In that blest age that is to be.

O! Golden age that is to be, Why movest thou so tardily? Why need the world so long endure The ills that love alone can cure? Come reign in sweet tranquillity Ye golden age that is to be.



THY CREED OF LOVE.

Dear God, help me to live each day, Free from all selfishness and wrong; Give me the grace to tread alway The path of peace, and cheer and song; And this my prayer to Thee above, Teach me Thy creed of love.

May it be said, when I depart This life for that mysterious shore, His was a tender loving heart, Dear Lord, I ask for nothing more. So, looking from Thy courts above, Teach me Thy creed of love.

What good can I accomplish here If I defraud, if I oppress; If in my heart I have not cheer And sympathy and tenderness? And so I pray to heaven above, Bestow Thy creed of love.



HEAVEN AND EARTH REPOICE.

Merry, Merry Christmas!
Let the bells ring loud and clear.
Merry, Merry Christmas.
Dearest day of all the year,
And all the little girls and boys
With dancing eyes and childish toys
With make the whole world brighter
With their happiness and cheer.

Merry, Merry Christmas!

'Tis a day we all should love.

Merry, Merry Christmas,

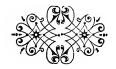
Echo from the courts above,

And from the great angelic throng

In fancy, we can hear the song,

That Christ is glad in glory

Same as we are happy here.



A CHRISTMAS SUGGESTION.

As we shall celebrate the birth Of Christ, the King of heaven and earth, So also may we do aright The things most pleasing in His sight.

And, if we cannot heal the blind We can, at least like Him, be kind; For kindness heals the broken heart, And that alone may be our part.

And if we cannot scatter bread To multitudes, we can instead Do something in a humble way To honor Christ this Christmas Day.



OUR RICHEST GIFT.

When we receive
On Christmas eve
The gifts from those we love,
May we not let
Ourselves forget
The Christ who reigns above.

Whose humble birth
Upon this earth
Meant peace for me and you
If we obey
And walk the way
That he ordains us to.

Then let us live
To love and give,
Our hearts devoid of guile
For, after all
When God doth call
There's nothing else worth while.



THE WORLD WITHIN.

The world grows better every day Is what the optimist will say; And smile as he is passing by With cheery word and sparkling eye.

The world grows worse, some men will say And, frowning darkly, sulk away And leave us in a doubting plight To figure out which one is right.

Suppose we turn and look within And if we find remorse and sin, We'll join the pessimistic man And find just all the fault we can.

But if the introspective view Reveals a heart that's pure and true Then we can truly feel and say, The world grows better every day.



IN THE VALLEY OF THE OLD ST. JOE.

There's a clear winding stream Fringed with willows bending low, And its waters agleam, Make sweet music as they flow, Where my life from care was free, Where the birds sang just for me, In the valley of the old St. Joe.

Take me back just tonight Where the St. Joe River flows, Where the moon shines so bright And the honey-suckle grows, For I long once more to be 'Neath the bending willow tree In the valley of the old St. Joe.

Roll along—roll along
Dear old stream as you have done;
Sing the same cheery song
'Till life's race at last is run
Then, forever may I rest
In the vale I love the best
In the valley of the old St. Joe.

OCTOBER.

Hail grandest month of all the year There's tonic in your atmosphere, And I am glad that you are here, Delightful old October.

Your sunset skies in colors rare complete a picture wondrous fair, And beauty greets us everywhere, In splendid old October.

The forest trees in gorgeous dress Resplendent in their loveliness All blushingly their love confess To you, my dear October.

Your captivating, wining way
Has made me wish that you would stay,
And I'll be sad when you're away,
Majestic old October.



WHY FEAR?

I'm here
And while I stay
My part I'll play
As best I can
For 'tis God's plan.
Why fear?

I'm here
As He ordained.
If heaven's gained
I'll see His face,
O, wondrous grace;
Why fear?

I'm here
At His behest,
And with the blest
I shall abide
At His dear side;
Why fear?



A DESIRE.

Could I but live one day as Thou didst live
No selfish motive hold, nor idle thought
Thinking, believing, acting as I ought,
All earthly hopes and treasures would I give
Could I but live, O Christ, as Thou didst live.





